

“Teacher, You’re on Mute!”: Teachers as Cultivators of Trans-Literacies

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Abstract : Research indicates that an educator’s belief system is reflected in the way they structure the learning environment. Their values and belief system have the potential to positively impact school readiness through an understanding of children’s development and the creation of a stable, motivating environment. Based on the premise that the social environment influences the development of social skills, knowledge construct, and shared values of young children, this study examined verbal and nonverbal exchanges between early childhood teachers and their preschool students within the context of remote learning. Using the qualitative method of data collection, the study determined the nature of interactions between preschoolers and their teachers within a remote learning environment at a preschool in Southeast Asia that utilized the Mother Tongue-based Multilingual Education (MTBMLE) Approach. From the lens of sociocultural theory, the study investigated preschoolers’ use of literacies to convey meaning and to interact within a remote learning environment. Using a Strengths Perspective, the study revealed the creativity and resourcefulness of preschoolers in expressing themselves through trans-literacies that were made possible by the use of online mode of learning within cultural and subcultural norms. The study likewise examined how social skills acquired by young children were transmitted (verbally or nonverbally) in their interactions with peers during Zoom meetings. By examining the dynamics of social exchanges between teachers and children, the findings of the study underscore the importance of providing support for preschool students as they apply acquired values and shared practices within a remote learning environment. The potential of distance learning in the early years will be explored, specifically in supporting young children’s language and literacy development. At the same time, the study examines the role of teachers as cultivators of trans-literacies. The teachers’ skillful use of technology in facilitating young children’s learning, as well as in supporting interactions with families, will be examined. The findings of this study will explore the potential of distance learning in early childhood education to establish continuity in learning, supporting young children’s social and emotional transitions, and nurturing trans-literacies that transcend prevailing definitions of learning contexts. The implications of teachers and parents working collaboratively to support student learning will be examined. The importance of preparing teachers to be resourceful, adaptable, and innovative to ensure that learning takes place across a variety of modes and settings will be discussed.

Keywords : transliteracy, preschoolers, remote learning, strengths perspective

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